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## AN ECLECTIC JOURNEY THROUGH EXPERIMENTAL PHYSICS, OR HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE NUCLEAR DATA

Eric B. Norman

*Nuclear Science Division, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Berkeley, CA*

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The databases that are compiled, evaluated, and disseminated by the national and international nuclear data programs are invaluable resources for basic physics research, engineering, medicine, and a host of applied activities. Sometimes this fact is not fully appreciated by either our scientific colleagues or by the funding agencies that pay for the work that is required to produce and maintain this information. Part of the reason for this is that many people are unaware of the breadth of the available data and the ease with which it can be accessed. In this talk, I will illustrate how the ability to rapidly access the broad range of nuclear data has facilitated my own research in fields from searches for double beta decay, to measurements of astrophysical reaction rates, to issues in homeland security. I will also point out places where new data would be especially helpful. In doing this, I hope to persuade even the skeptics that for the benefit of the broad scientific community, it is imperative that the outstanding work of the nuclear data community continue.